Pest Alert

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

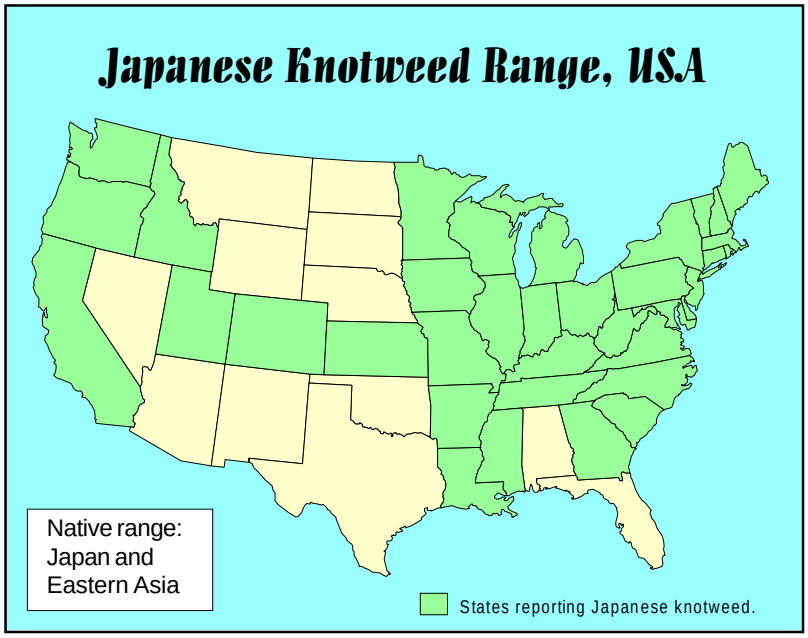
Northeastern Area
NA-PR-04-99

Japanese Knotweed — *Polygonum cuspidatum* Sieb. & Zucc.

Japanese knotweed is native to Eastern Asia, and is one of the first plants to appear on volcano slopes after volcanic activity. It was introduced to the United Kingdom as an ornamental in 1825, and from there to North America in the 19th Century.

It appears to require high-light habitats, and does very well along roadways and rivers. It reproduces by seed and large rhizomes, which may reach a length of 40 to 60 feet. A small piece of rhizome can float down a river and begin to grow once it is deposited on land. These buried rhizomes have grown through 2 inches of asphalt!

Individual Japanese knotweed



For more information visit http://www.nps.gov/htdocs2/plants/alien/map/pocu1.htm.

Japanese knotweed is also known as Japanese or Mexican bamboo, because the stem becomes woody and has enlarged nodes similar to those of a bamboo fishing pole.

It is a very fast grower that can reach a height of 10 feet and overtop native vegetation very quickly.

The heart-shaped leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Although variable in size, the leaves are normally about 6 inches long by 3 to 4 inches wide. Minute greenish-white flowers are produced in axillary panicles.

This plant is a threat to native vegetation because it often forms dense patches, which shade out all other plants. It is a particular threat in riparian areas where it can survive floods and quickly colonize scoured streambanks. Japanese knotweed is difficult to eradicate once it has become established.

Alternating heart-shaped leaves with sprays of minute flowers arising in the angle between the leaf and the stout stem.

Dense patch of Japanese knotweed

For more information on Japanese knotweed and other weeds, please visit the following Web sites:

NPCI Alien Plant Working Group
http://www.nps.gov/htdocs2/plants/alien/fact/pocu1.htm

Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service – Noxious Weed Home page
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/weeds/weedhome.html

Noxious Weeds, Exotic and Invasive Plant Resources:
http://bluegoose.arw.r9.fws.gov/NWRSFiles/InternetResources/weeds.html

Rutgers Cooperative Extension web page
http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/weeddocuments/jknotwed.htm

Photographs by Rosemarie Boyle.

For additional information, contact:

USDA Forest Service
Wayne National Forest
Rosemarie Boyle
219 Columbus Road
Athens, OH 45701
(740) 592-0200

Or visit the Wayne National Forest Website:
http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/wayne

USDA Forest Service
Forest Health Protection
180 Canfield Street
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 285-1541

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